

EXCITEMENT CITY UNLIMITED

#7

March 2nd, 1988

Circulation 83

Use Working Assets

What a month. What a month.

What's the matter? Seeing double again?

Misha Mazda is having problems already. The day after I typed Richard Walkerdine's letter about the "35,000 trouble free miles" he has enjoyed with his Mazda, some punk tried to break into Misha with a screwdriver. Maybe they gave up because the lock wouldn't give way. Maybe after they started they noticed the car's starter interrupt and lack of radio. In any case they just made a mess of the lock and left. Morons. The paintwork was untouched but it still should set us back about \$100.

On the upside I've started night classes in "Money & Capital Markets", which is a lot more fun than it sounds. I've decided to have a decent bash at banking as a career. To find more interesting, responsible and (ahem) remunerative work, a little more relevant education is useful. Ideally, I would like to hitch up with a Working Assets style firm in New York. We shall see.

Of course this will ^{mean} less time spent on the hobby, but I'll see what I can manage. Actually this issue is only twelve pages because the deadline just crept up on me unawares without me having done any advance preparation at all. I've held over some interesting Railway Rivals comments for next issue so maybe we'll be back up to sixteen pages. No promises though.

The only thing I do promise though is to keep the zine running to strict deadlines. I'm proud of the fact that I've managed to keep ECU to tight five week deadlines. I feel that a sloppy turnaround makes the games boring. It also trains me to keep the zine within limits.

PLAYLIST: REM, Document, Life's Rich Pageant; New Order, Substance; Jesus & Mary Chain, Darklands; Suzanne Vega; Sly & Robbie, Rhythm Killers, Fleetwood Mac, Rumours, Big Audio Dynamite

Excitement City Unlimited is published by Simon Billenness and Barbara Passoff who live at 630 Victory Blvd. Apt. 6F, Staten Island, NY 10301, USA. Home phone is (718) 981 6247. ECU costs an extortionate 75¢ to North and South Americans. All others pay \$1 to receive this airmail. Meat is Murder.

Imagine
your profit
potential...



**HAD YOU ACQUIRED THE FIRST
GOLD DOLLAR EVER ISSUED**

MTB recommends the Gold 50 ECU bullion coin for its special potential and value. ECUs are the first coins minted in the official currency for the EEC.

Gold ECU's give investors more value than any other bullion coin because they sell at the lowest premium over spot gold. Each magnificent coin contains one half ounce of .999 fine gold and is Official Legal Tender of Belgium.

MTB buys and sells over 600 types of coins and precious metals including Eagles, Pandas, Maple Leafs, and Nuggets. To find out why the Belgian Gold ECU is superior, or to place your order, call MTB today. Code: WJ424



MORRIS PERLIS
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
& GENERAL MANAGER
PERSONAL CARD DIVISION

Mr. Simon C. Billenness
630 Victory Bv, Apt
Staten Island, NY 10301



Notice of Approved
Cardmembership

EXCITORIAL

I suppose the rest of you receive the above junk mail too. I can't help sniggering whenever Barbara and I receive something from American Express. Their recent, brainless advert may have something to do with it. For the sake of those of you in Britain and Australia, who may not have seen it, let me give you a brief description. A businessman and his daughter go rafting in the wilderness. An accident occurs and the daughter suffers a broken wrist. Does the man call for an ambulance like any sane person would do in the circumstances? No, Mr Braindeath calls American Express... If you have a Visa or Mastercard and a couple of store cards (which cost nothing) you can charge almost anywhere. An American Express card is basically just a status symbol and at \$45 a year, we can easily live without one.

Over the last couple of years, some credit card companies have made a pitch to consumers' altruism. New York's Dollar Dry Dock bank offers the Vietnam Vet card. Part of the annual fee goes to the Vietnam Vets of America. So that you'll use their card, every time you charge something, the VVA receives a tiny donation. I wonder what John Boardman would make of that? Recently another bank (I forget which one - based in Delaware, I think) offered a similar product: the Olympics Card. Why giving to a healthy, well-adjusted group of people as athletes is preferable to fighting world hunger or heart disease is beyond me. These days the Olympics seem to be organised just so a handful of competing countries can bask in national glory as their well-heeled teams pound the rest of the world into the dust. This form of national chauvinism strikes me cold these days, but then I'm not sure which country I should support any more.

As a contrast may I recommend Working Assets? Barbara and I both have Working Assets credit cards. Each time we use the card, Working Assets donates 5¢ to a pool of progressive non-profit organisations. The organisations can be lumped into four main categories: peace, human rights, the environment and hunger. Conservatives may scoff but I'm impressed by Working Assets' commitment to such worthy yet contentious groups as Planned Parenthood, SANE, the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force and Oxfam America.

However the credit card is small potatoes compared to the Working Assets Money Market Fund. Instead of just making small donations, the Money Market Fund invests money in firms which meet their standards of stability and positive economic and social impact. In layman's terms, they steer clear of risky investments and they prefer to invest in instruments that create jobs, finance housing and promote small businesses. Wherever possible they invest in firms which do not discriminate against women and minorities, bargain fairly with their employees and are creative and generous in their charitable contributions. Working Assets describes this as a "tool for practical idealists" who want their money to work for their principles. The fund offers an interest rate which is competitive with other banks. Anyone who considers themselves as politically progressive should give Working Assets a hard look.

Working Assets: 230 California Street, San Francisco, CA 94111

For information call: 1-800-52-APPLY

WORLD DIP CON UPDATE #3

I promised to send regular progress reports to everyone who registered. However, now, I don't think that will be needed. For starters, all those registered so far subscribe to ECU, so I might as well just publish the latest developments here. Secondly, Richard Walkerdine has decided to send American registrants the progress reports direct from Britain. Anyway, most Americans should find a copy of the latest progress report, courtesy of a photocopier at work I found unattended...

I currently have registration fees from John Crosby, Fred Davis, Scott Hanson and Larry Peery. I've finally decided that I will definitely be going myself. Larry and Scott intend to make their own travel arrangements and Fred seems to be inclined that way. I'm not sure about John. I have looked into group travel and, as I thought, it is basically unfeasible for groups under twenty. Group travel would also involve taking a charter flight which I refuse to do after some nasty experiences. Therefore I'm going to abandon the idea. I'm planning to fly Virgin myself because the price is reasonable (currently \$601 round trip) and they leave from Newark (my most accessible airport) and arrive at Gatwick.

Fred Davis asks if he can charge accommodation at the con on his VISA. I'm sure you can't because the room fees are paid directly to the con organisers. I would advise everyone to expect to pay in cash or travellers cheques.

Fred also asks about the possibility of sightseeing trips. I notice from the progress report enclosed that "tourist excursions" are possible if there is enough interest. At the very least, I hear that one person, Kath Collman, is responsible for providing plenty of information on local tourist sites.

I need to know if anyone would be interested in taking part in "Adopt-a-Yank". This is a delightfully fannish idea whereby British hobbyists volunteer to put one of their American cousins some time during their stay in Britain. I think it would be great if some British people perhaps volunteered to pick up an American from the airport. Derek Caws is organising this in Britain though so far the only volunteers have been Doug Rowling in Glasgow and Steve Thomas in Oxford, both of whom, unfortunately, are too far away from London airports to be able to do a pick up. (Incidentally, Steve Thomas states that "pretty Americans are preferred", but, sadly, neither Barbara nor Cathy Ozog intends to go...) If anyone is interested in "Adopt-a-Yank" please let me know. Hopefully things will start to hang together as the date approaches.

There's still time to register for World Dip Con if anyone else from North America intends to go. Just send me your \$15...

rollupguysrollupguysrollupguysrollupguysrollupguysrollupguysrollupguysrollu

Tsk, an awkward space to fill...

Passchendaele 51 (François Cuerrier, 2303 Eglinton Ave East, #305, Scarborough, Ontario, M1K 2N6, Canada.) is quite impressive. It seems that François is not going to be as over-ambitious as I feared. In fact, the latest issue is lean, well-written and exudes a general air of competence and wit. It's pretty laid back and fannish too. Would recommend it to Brits and Australians for the writing and North Americans because it currently has several game openings (just Diplomacy though - nothing wildly exciting). There is a slightly tongue in cheek editorial on the future of the Canadian Diplomacy Organisation. François wants it to disband because it doesn't serve any particularly pressing function. It seems to me that the only function it currently serves is boosting Alan Stewart's ego, who is currently running for the CDO Presidency. This seems to be a perfect argument for its continuation, since Alan's campaign makes amusing reading in Praxis.

THE GAMES

WILLIAM RUFUS DEVANE KING

AUTUMN 1908

No errors to announce! It'll never last...

Retreats: Russian a bud-gal, Turkish a ank-smy, German a mar disbands (no ret. ordered!)

Austria: Kevin Tighe

a con s Persian f aeg-ank (supported move impossible)

Barbary: Jake Walters

f eng-bre, f mao s f eng-bre, f sao-wms, f nao-mwg, a sah-lib, a alg s a sah-lib

France: Jeff Hoffman

a par-bur, a bre holds

Germany: Mike Pustilnik

a pie-mar (no such unit), a bud-tri, a ven s a bud-tri, a tri-ser, a sil-gal,
a vie s a sil-gal, a pru-war, a den-lvn, a mwy-stp, a mun-boh, f nth-lon,
f bal c a den-lvn, f pic-bel, f bar-mwg

Italy: Robert Acheson

a mar-spa, a gas s a mar-spa, f rom holds, f gre s Persian f cre-ion (no such order)
a alb-tri, f adr s a alb-tri

Persia: John Crosby

a ank s f aeg-smy, f aeg-smy, f ant holds, a eth-sah, a tun-alg, f sms-ion,
f cre s f sms-ion

Russia: Conrad von Metzke

a gal-bud, a ser s a gal-bud, a rum s a gal-bud, a bul s a ser, f bla s a bul

Turkey: Doug Brown

a smy-con

Retreats: French a bre-pic/par/otb, German a bud dies, Turkish a smy gets knobbled
in the adjustments. Bye, Doug...

Adjustments

A: 1: con

B: 6: mor, alg, can, por, ~~lgn~~, lpl, +bre

F: 1: par, ~~lgn~~ Remove one or no change

G: 17: kie, mun, ber, bel, vie, den, mwy, hol, edi, stp, pie, swe, tri, ven, mar,
+lon, +war Build three (owed two more!)

I: 5: rom, nap, cor, gre, ~~lgn~~, spa Remove one

P: 9: ara, jor, ira, eth, egy, tun, smy, +cre, +ank Build two

R: 6: mos, sev, ~~lgn~~, rum, bud, ser, bul Build one

T: 0: ~~lgn~~ remove one

PRESS

Barbary-Germany: Sorry but I don't want this to end yet

Barbary-Persia: I'll stop Germany when you get out of Tunis and the Antarctic

Italy-Persia: There, you wanted support, there's support!

Italy Berlin: Don't you have any enemies?

GAMENOTES

Conrad wishes to apologise sincerely for his bad handling of both the Russian position and the publication of the game results (when the game was in Costaguana). He wants to resign from the game so that he can spend enough time on his other commitments. That seems sensible and I, personally, wish him well. I'm calling Rudi Rudisill (9933 Clearfield Avenue, Vienna, VA 22180) to take over as the permanent replacement for Russia.

GAMENOTES (continued...)

We have two endgame proposals.

- 1) Concession to Germany
- 2) Two way Barbary-Germany draw

Abstentions count as a vote against but proposals defeated solely by abstentions will be automatically repropose next season with abstentions counting in favour.

Deadline: Saturday, April 2nd 1988

SIGNUPFORAGAMEYOU MISERABLES ODDS SIGNUPFORAGAMEYOU MISERABLES ODDS SIGNUPFORAGAMEYOU MISERABLES

Stab: Derwood Bowen, Glenn Petroski, Brad Wilson

Stab is an interesting hidden movement variant of Diplomacy. Only contested moves are reported. Players have to keep track of their own units and guess about the whereabouts of enemy armies and fleets. This is a great game for paranoids. No gamefee, rules available on request. Four more wanted.

Downfall of the Lord of the Rings: Doug Brown, Cathy Ozog, Rod Walker

Downfall is a much playtested British variant based on the famous Tolkein trilogy. It is generally regarded as the best Tolkein variant. Get to play Rohan, Gondor, Gandalf or even Mordor itself. No gamefee, rules available on request. Five more wanted.

Railway Rivals: GM Brian Longstaff

Map T (Middle Earth): Mark Nelson 4 wanted

International Diplomacy: GM Mark Nelson

Martin Kloosterman (Australia), David Stone (Trinidad), Edward Ainsworth (UK), Laurence Cronin (Grenada), Ron Cameron (USA)

This is a "Seven Nations" game, ie one which only has one player from a single country. Two wanted.

International Diplomacy: GM Bob Gossage

John Piggott, John Cain

This is a free for all currently containing the leftovers from the Seven Nations game. Five more wanted.

Standbys: Cline 9: Jake Walters?, Tom Ramsey?

International Dip: Bill Young

All Purpose: Doug Brown, Martin Kloosterman

I still need standbys and lots of them. If you sign up for any standby list you receive one free issue immediately. If you submit standby orders which are used, you receive a further three free issues. Roll up! Roll up! Your ECU needs you...

GAMESTART!! RAILWAY RIVALS MAP N (New England) GM: Brian Longstaff

Doug Brown, PO Box 584, Penngrove, CA 94951-0584, USA
Mark Nelson, 11 Lancaster Grove, Kirkstall, Leeds, W Riding LS5 3DY, England
Martin Kloosterman, 12 Gordon Street, Port Macquarie, NSW 2444, Australia
Conrad von Metzke, 4374 Donald Avenue, San Diego, CA 92117

LETUCE

Richard Walkerdine We bought our Mazda 323 3½ years ago and it has since given us 35,000 trouble-free miles - it's a lovely car and quite sporty. You've made a good choice. My only regret about the Mazda is that 18 months ago I got myself a company car (a Cavalier!), so now Claire drives the Mazda and I don't get a look-in!...

Scott Hanson Frauke liked the story of Misha Mazda, but why a Russian name for a Japanese car?

((Barbara should really get the kudos for choosing the car since she was the one who read up the car books and consumer reports. Several people we know have told us since that we made an excellent choice for the price. It's nice to know we did something right for a change!

The name Barbara chose has nothing to do with Gorbachev but might have something to do with Mikhail Baryshnikov...

Michael Hopcroft About all the complaints you've been getting from British viewers of Dr Who: Sad to say, but the series is probably being made more for the US market than for home consumption. I wouldn't say the acting is a problem so much as the declining scripts. Writers have been falling away at an appalling rate, and the replacements seem to be TV writers with little experience or knowledge of science fiction. // "Time and the Rani" certainly showed some of the problems the series will have to deal with, particularly in scripts that make no sense whatsoever.

((I think you've hit the nail on the head: terrible writing. We've only seen the first Sylvester McCoy story, "Time and The Rani" which has largely consists of the Doctor and Melanie breaking in and out of the Rani's laboratory. As Barbara pointed out, as an introduction to the new Doctor, it fails totally to spend enough time developing his new character. "Robot" did a good job of setting the stage for Tom Baker, although the story stank. "Spearhead From Space" both facilitated the entry of Jon Pertwee and provided one of the series most compelling scripts. "Time and the Rani" failed on both counts.))

Michael Hopcroft As for Sylvester McCoy being a step up from Colin Baker, I have theorized that it was the hiatus in 1986 that really did Colin in as the Doctor. It's little wonder he seemed uncertain in the part after coming back to it after a year's enforced absence! Part of the problem is that nobody who is handling the scripts now has any clear idea who the Doctor is and what he is like. It's easy to throw in a trademark like "he wears rotten clothes" or "he mixes metaphors", but the part is so amorphous that the actor has to fill in the gaps as best he can. By the end of his run, Peter Davison had an excellent concept of who the Doctor was. Colin Baker never had a chance to reach that conclusion, but the potential was there. To play the part well you have to separate yourself from your ordinary life and everything you've done before as an actor, and learn to think in non-human terms and make connections one normally would not make. Peter Davison said it perfectly when he talked about the "instant charisma" of being the Doctor.

I'm rambling on. Let me be more concrete. Here is how I would rate each of the Doctors on a scale of 1 (worst conceivable for the part) to 10 (absolutely perfect). Nobody makes a 10, but nobody has been a 1 either.

William Hartnell: 6. NOBODY knew who the Doctor was when he took on the part, not even the writer who created the Doctor (not Terry Nation as is commonly supposed but a little-known English TV writer named Anthony Coburn). His Doctor emphasized his alien and inaccessible qualities, but by contrast there are moments of sly humor.

Patrick Troughton: 9. The standard by which future Doctors would be measured, his was easily the most accessible Doctor. He combined whimsy and a human touch to make a memorable character who could easily take the attention away from the monsters which filled his brief stay on the program. Few of his stories survive: most of the classic Troughton stories were wiped, and are being earnestly sought after by fans all over the world. Easily the most popular Doctor for reunion stories, and the Doctor who relied least on character gimmicks to define what he was doing.

Jon Pertwee: 8. The Doctor as a father-figure faded away with Pertwee, to be replaced with a more vigorous physical approach to the part. Pertwee had an excellent image of who he was in the part, which helped as many of his adventures were set in contemporary times. His character is best defined in his relationships with other characters, which were closer and more complex in the Pertwee era than they had been previously.

Tom Baker: 8. Easily the most popular Doctor in the US, Tom Baker used his natural charm and wit to excellent advantage: he had a superb grasp of his own abilities and how to use them. His Doctor was eccentric and unpredictable, but at the same time compelling. But he was not the perfect Doctor, as his madcap tendencies tended to run away with him. Still, to many Americans in particular, Tom Baker is THE Doctor.

Peter Davison: 8, although many who have not thought about it as much would rate him much lower. With few quirks to make his Doctor stand out, Davison managed to build a quite effective characterization. In a return to earlier eras, his relationships with his companions were more difficult, and his Doctor was emotionally vulnerable to a considerable degree. His tendencies to internalize meant that it is not always easy to understand this Doctor, but I have always had a great empathy with this incarnation of the Doctor. If I had my way Peter Davison would still be playing the Doctor, as he left the series just as he was truly getting the knack of the part.

Colin Baker: 6, with extenuating circumstances due to the hiatus which denied him the time needed to get a good grasp of the role. Colin was never able to get a clear conception of the part; time to develop the role would clearly have helped. When he had a good script to work with, he was great. But he was never able to go beyond the script to carry a story himself when needed (as Tom Baker in particular was able to). When the scripts were bad, he looked terrible, and in his two seasons there were only two really good stories.

Sylvester McCoy: 5 for now. Never evaluate a Doctor on his first season; it's a difficult part which an actor has to grow into. Poor scripting for McCoy's first season doesn't help. I personally think that given time he will make a good (though probably not great) Doctor. But for now, it's too early to make a judgement.

((Barbara and I would personally give Tom Baker a 9. As you say, he could shine even if he had a lousy script. With decent writers producing scripts like "Genesis of the Daleks", "City of Death" and "Keeper of Traken" (amongst others) the series was at its best as far as we're concerned. I would also rate Colin Baker far below William Hartnell. It is true that Colin was not given a fair chance but I still feel that basically he was not up to the part.

I hear that another Dr Who movie is in the works. Who would you like to see in the Doctor's role? Apart from a Tom Baker comeback, Barbara and I have come up with the idea of Jim Dale. How about John Houseman!?!))

Linda Courtemanche I must protest your political-perspective chart. Under "left-wing" you list "Courtemanche". That makes it include Steve as well as me, which is not strictly accurate. I am left-wing, yes; Steve, however, is liberal or moderate (depends on the issue). Also, which "Martin" is on the list with me? Dick or Julie or both?

((Much of the fun of compiling the list was anticipating anguished replies like yours! I should have typed "Courtemanche, L" since I was rating your politics not Steve's. The "Martin" was Dick, actually. I really must get out of the habit of treating hobby couples as gestalt entities...))

You asked who I want for Prez. My answer: I don't know yet! An issue comparison chart was posted in the newsroom at my paper (courtesy of Thursday's Christian Science Monitor), and maybe I'll know more about my choice after I xerox and read that on Monday. At the moment I am leaning toward Simon and the Duke. I met Simon at a reception last summer (I was covering it for the paper), and immediately respected him for the intelligence and honesty I sensed. Sure would be a change to have a President who doesn't need cue cards to tell him what he's doing! I also noted that Simon has some charisma up close -- something that may not be evident through a TV screen -- and his wife (for those who care about this sort of thing) is a charmer. To be more specific about Simon, I enjoyed hearing him profess to be against acid rain and Ollie North and the current level of defence spending. But I don't feel I know enough about economics to judge his pawns for balancing the budget and putting Americans back to work. As for Dukakis, I agree with you that the trouncing he got from us a few years ago taught him that voters value honesty above all. I doubt if it's a lesson he's forgotten. I would not mind him being President, but I, too, wonder how he plans to bite the (military) hand that feeds him!

((Our politics must be pretty close because I had narrowed my preference down to Simon and Dukakis with several reservations about both. I note that the Duke is going South declaring that we need to build up conventional arms. This is interesting considering he professes not to have a "Southern Strategy". I find it revealing that you "would not mind him being President". It seems many other people feel the same because Dukakis has the lowest "negative" rating of all the Democrats and Republicans. (Pat Robertson's negatives fair popped off the end of the chart...) If voters simply choose people who they dislike least, Dukakis could be a big winner. If I had a vote I would probably go for Dukakis instead of Simon because the Duke is acceptable, electable and we need a Democrat in the White House before all the liberal Supreme Court justices snuff it.))

Scott Hanson So you in your infinite political wisdom have labelled me a liberal. Don't you know that being called liberal is the political kiss of death these days? Can't you at least change it to neo-liberal? I've always thought of myself as a moderate wimp, but Minnesota is so far to the left of the rest of the country that a moderate here would be a liberal anyplace else. Actually I've always thought of liberals as wimps, Walter Mondale being the prime example. I've never been able to stand him. //

I know more who not to go for than who to support. Unlike you, I find Dukakis to be utterly unqualified. So he ran Massachusetts during an economic boom? Any idiot can run a state that's doing well, doing it in a depression takes skill. So he balanced the state budget? A state is required to run a balanced budget. Does he know anything about foreign policy? About running the defense department? So he has the "correct" position on the contras, that really distinguishes him from the Democratic field. All I know about his administrative skill is his choice of campaign aides, like the one who leaked the Biden video tape. And as far as I'm concerned, a Northeastern liberal would be the kiss of death for the Democrats. (Is my Midwestern bias showing too much?)

So I don't like Dukakis. I don't like Gephardt either, although for selfish reasons I suppose I should. (He'd screw up agriculture so much that they'd need a whole army of economists to straighten it out.) // Simon is a liberal wimp. Babbitt is a governor, and like Dukakis is by definition unqualified. I don't like Gore's wife censorship of music. (That's a point I haven't seen. Most college students are aware of Tipper Gore and her stand against rock music. Most of them would be very unwilling to volunteer for a Gore campaign. And what is a campaign without college age volunteers?) Hart has at least thought about problems of foreign policy and running the defense department, but we all know the problems he has putting thoughts into action.

Which leaves the Rev. Jackson. While he's never held office, he has run a national organization. He has run for President before, and is at least aware of the regional differences of the country. I was surprised to see how developed his views of foreign policy are, he's learned a lot since cavorting with Castro and Ortega. I'm impressed with the fact that he has grown since 1984. He's a hell of a lot more fun to listen to than anyone else. He has no chance to be nominated or elected and I wouldn't entirely trust him in office. But I'm going to support him at our caucus for several reasons. He's raising issues that no one else is raising that the Democratic party have to deal with. He's bringing a number of new people into the political process. And living in a black inner city area, he can do the most for our neighborhood. He's the only candidate who has bothered to visit south Minneapolis. (No, wait, Dole stopped in at Honeywell our friendly neighborhood defense contractor.)

Why does Alan Stewart feel so strongly about American politics? Is he resigned to Canada being the 51st state? Has he not recovered from the shock of the New Democrats leading in the opinion polls in Canada? Is it his tactic to sabotage the Free Trade Agreement? Does it have something to do with his refusal to send me a sample of Praxis?

((Judging by your letter, it seems that you think liberals are wimps because you're more left-wing than I thought you were. I guess your feelings are proof that Jackson is succeeding in attracting white voters the second time around. He came in a decent second in Minnesota, didn't he?

And what, may I ask, is wrong with a foreigner taking an interest in American politics?... The US political scene strongly affects what goes on in the rest of the world. It's also full of colorful loonies like Robertson and La Rouché. I'm not surprised that Alan is bored with what passes for intrigue in his frozen backwater. British politics nowadays is just as dull and downbeat. Are you still smarting because Alan didn't send you a copy of Praxis? Go on, Alan, send the lad a sample...))

Linda Courtemanche I started out thinking that the Democrats were a shoo-in, since all they needed to do was push one decent man and make sure that he kept his nose clean. As we know, that hasn't happened.

Then I decided that all the Republicans needed to do was stay aloof from the Democrat's gaffes and keep their noses clean! Yet now we have Bush-Rather and Bush-Dole verbal fistfights!

Do you have the feeling that it may not be a campaign after all in '88, but simply a process of elimination? //

You're right -- "good, light-hearted fannish fun in the hobby" does seem to be a rare breed. HI does, as you observed, do what it can about that, and so do you. Chat may not have a deep purpose, any more than a midnight bull-session has a deep purpose; it simply is a way for friends to share. And maybe that's more important than we give it credit for being!

((Thanks for your support. I was hoping that somebody (maybe Stephen Dorneman) might write in and disagree with me but you were the only American to respond to the editorial!

Actually, I wouldn't put HI and ECU in the same category, though I would consider both to be fannish. I find the discussions in HI a little too fluffy and non-controversial for my taste. However I did enjoy the recent animal experimentation debate; I nearly wrote in to say that anyone concerned about the suffering of animals ought to stop eating them... I'm aiming for a more substantial letter column with some pointed comments. The latest Praxis (#19) is an excellent example of the sort of zine I'd like to produce. I also have in mind several classic British zines like NMR! and Greatest Hits.

Here's an interesting contrast between our tastes in letter columns. Go back a page and look at the four paragraph section of your letter that I reprinted. Normally I wouldn't have printed the first three paragraphs because your comments are more of the throwaway variety. However in your fourth paragraph you're making a point which you obviously believe in that makes it more interesting, at least from my point of view.

It seems that part of the task of editing a good letter column is training your readers to write the letters that you prefer to print. Since you commented on the phone a couple of months ago that I never seem to print your letters, I thought I'd give you a brief insight into what I like. Mind you, you'd never read anything like this in Praxis. Alan is a talented creep who seems to generate good copy from his readers without making any apparent effort. I'd cut trades but my enjoyment of his zine overrides my inferiority complex.))

Mark Nelson The Yorkshire Gallant 26 is containing (is containing?) two articles on American dipdom - the BN thing from Everything 74 and Dave McCrumb's article from Abattoir 8. Do you mind if I reprint your editorial on the American hobby? It would go quite well with the other articles.

((As I've probably said before, anybody may reprint anything from ECU. You don't need to ask permission first! I only require that you send me a copy of the zine afterwards. Ego and all that.))

Jan Niechwiadowicz Your piece on "Where are the New Quality Zines?" is something I have been worried about now for nearly a year, but in regard to the British hobby. The British hobby seems to have lost a centre and there just aren't any new zines. The problem is slowly been recognized by others in the hobby. //

One project I have been working on is The History of The British Postal Gaming Hobby. Version one with my new zine "The Abode of the Abnormal Abbot" are enclosed. Hope you find them of interest. Please note I am only unable to trade with American zines but will take American subbers via the ISE. Not sure what price to charge. If you decide to plug the project, you will have to put a price on it. Will be charging price of airmail for the zine nad price of airmail plus one dollar for the main booklet.

((When I first entered the British hobby around 1980-81, the centre of the hobby seemed to be such zines as Perspiring Dreams, NMR! and Greatest Hits. As the hobby shifted to include more FRP gamers, zines like Denver Glont and The Acolyte seemed to embody the heart of the hobby. Around this time there was an explosion in the number of zines and editors shifted from trading with every zine to trading with only a selection. This made it more difficult for editors to keep track of what was going on in the hobby. Consequently, the hobby became a lot more unmanageable and amorphous. It's was then that the need for a reliable listings zine (like 20 Years On) became more pressing but the last few editors weren't really up to the task.

((It would be good to have some kind of central hobby zine so long as the zine remains just an information gathering service and not an attempt to establish some kind of hobby "authority". I look forward to seeing how AAA develops. However I do feel that it is extremely difficult to create a "hobby zine" from scratch. The best "central zines" as far as I'm concerned are simply postal gaming zines which contain a lively letter column and plenty of hobby news.))

Brian Longstaff In reply to Mike Hopcroft's comments, concerning me complaining about my gameload:

- 1) I was not complaining, merely pointing out the facts that I have a few more commitments than just ECU.
- 2) What I did not mention at the time were recent commitments to my personal life ie my job is soon to finish; my girlfriend dumped me just prior to Xmas, and the resulting deep depression lasted well into January; various friends who are having their own problems and look to me for help and support; etc, etc, etc.

Believe me, there was a time when I almost wrote calling the ECU RR games off. Anyway, things have improved, or you wouldn't be reading this now. The point is, that I learned a long time ago - the hard way in fact - about letting the hobby rule your life. It's a mistake I'm about to make again.

((I don't think that Mike Hopcroft was criticising you. However, judging from your letter, I can't blame you for being a little over-sensitive.))

HOWABOUTSMEFANNISHSTUFFHOWABOUTSMEFANNISHHOWABOUTSMEFANNISHSTUFFHOWABOUTSMEFANNIS

YE OLDE ZINE PLUGGE SPOT

One of the problems of running the International Subscription Exchange is having a shortfall of cash on one side. At the moment, I'm holding a surplus of dollars because not enough British people are subscribing to American zines. Here are a few*select zines which are well worth blowing a few quid on.

I'm sure you're all sick of me raving about Praxis (Alan Stewart, 702-25 St Mary Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4Y 1R2). The latest issue (#19) is a big improvement on the rather disappointing issue 18. I get the impression that Alan types the whole zine first draft. I suspect it certainly seems a lot more off the cuff than ECU. The letter column contains several lengthy letters on Robert Bork (I'm still waiting for someone to actually write in and agree with Alan), the Runestone Poll (Bruce Linsey has designated Praxis the official Runestone discussion forum) and the Bad Boys, of whom the least said the better. I love some of Alan's offhand comments e.g. (after Bruce's lengthy letter on the Poll) "The 1988 Runestone Poll Feuding Season is hereby declared open." How Alan manages to project his arrogant conservatism as an endearing quality is beyond me. This is a zine with class.

"I'm not quite dead..." scribbles Jim Burgess on The Abyssinian Prince #11. Well, I'm glad to hear that. Jim was threatening to fold the zine due to lack of feedback but I can see now that it was simply a ploy to scoop up the sympathy vote in the next Runestone Poll. Jim seems to want to concentrate on music now and he's actively seeking musical letters and reviews. His other zine, The Boob Report contains this gem from Bob Olsen "Cocteau Twins...as Joe Biden once said, this is what New Age music would sound like, if New Age was any good." Jim Burgess, 100 Holden Street, Providence, RI 02908-5731

*well, just two actually...

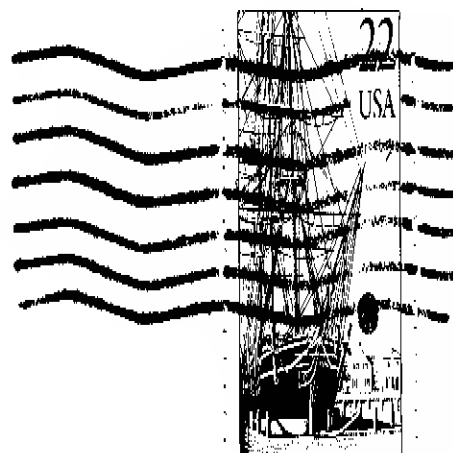
FROM

SIMON BILLENNESS & BARBARA PASSOFF

630 VICTORY BLVD. APT. 6F

STATEN ISLAND, NY 10301

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



January 9, 1788

Connecticut

YOUR CREDIT IS:

Larry Peery

Box 8416

San Diego, CA 92102-0416

*To new Labor Secretary McLaughlin,
cabinet status means never having to
say you're sorry; she issues a memo for-
bidding letters signed by her to begin
with an apology.*

DEADLINE: Saturday, April 2nd 1988